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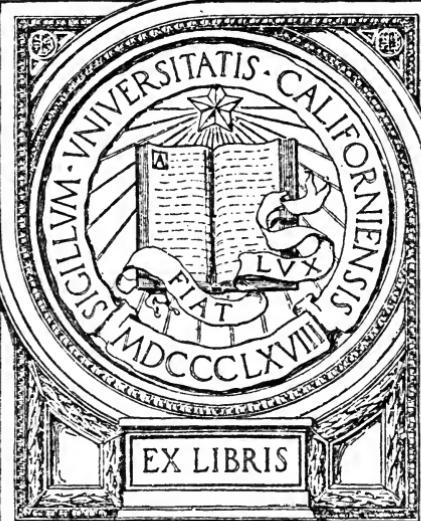


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KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

BY

JAMES EDWIN CREIGHTON

AN ADDRESS

Delivered Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society
of Brown University

JUNE 15th, 1909

[Reprinted from the International Journal of Ethics, Vol. XX]

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KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE.*

J. E. CREIGHTON.

I WISH to begin by congratulating the chapter of Phi Beta Kappa that has its home at Brown University on its long and honorable traditions, and especially on the eminent services that its members, through successive generations, have rendered to science, to education, and to public life. When I recall even a few names from that long roll of "illustrious living and noble dead" who owe their nurture and inspiration to this University and to this Society, I can appreciate the feelings with which you are assembled for your annual celebration, and am deeply sensible of the honor of being invited to address you on this occasion.

The motto of the Phi Beta Kappa society, "Philosophy the pilot of life," furnishes the text for the reflections that I have to lay before you to-day. This motto suggests the famous saying of Socrates in the "Apology," that a life without criticism or examination is not a life worth living for a human being. For *φιλοσοφία* in your motto, as I understand it, signifies just the free exercise of thought that finds its function in examining and testing the opinions and beliefs that pass current in ordinary life. It is this faculty of reflecting on experience, and finding its value in terms of some general principles, that differentiates the life of man from that of the lower animals. Philosophy in this sense, as reflection, or the effort to estimate the meanings and values that are involved in different experiences of life, may be said to be the essential birthright of man, and is always present in some degree in every human consciousness. The term 'reflection' may suggest that this activity is something external

* Address delivered before the Society of Phi Beta Kappa, at Brown University, June, 1909.

to, or that supervenes upon, the ordinary experience of men. But it is no foreign or borrowed gleam that reflection throws upon our ideas, but the internal light of reason itself, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Thinking is not therefore a mere incident, a secondary intention, as it were, of human life. Nor do we adequately characterize its relation to life when we emphasize its utility as the essential instrument and indispensable guide of practice. Reflection, as the free and unrestricted play of ideas, is rather to be regarded as the essential business or primary intention of human life. Philosophy is thus no foreign pilot that has been taken on board, but the expression of what is most truly and intimately the individual's own nature. It is not merely regulative, but constitutive of life, being the heart and center from which flow all its practical activities, and to which they all again return for constant adjustment and renewal. It is the ever-present fountain of youth, the vivifying and transforming element of our experience which has the power to make all things new. Without it, our highest activities would be blind and mechanical, our righteousness would be like the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, having no connection with the innermost center of our personality. For mere practical activities tend to become mechanical and perpetuate themselves through habit; and when they lose all connection with the reflective source of rational life, they are incapable of maintaining their spiritual vitality and become empty forms without substance.

When we thus attempt to regard life in its true ideal significance, to see life steadily and to see it whole, it seems possible to rise above the opposition between knowledge and practice. Nevertheless, it may be said, this is a mere counsel of perfection, an ideal that cannot be realized under the actual conditions that constitute our finite and fragmentary mode of existence. We find that, as a matter of fact, there is a tendency to separate, and oftentimes to sharply oppose, these two aspects of experience, giving

either one the primacy, and regarding the other as of secondary or merely derivative importance. Knowledge, for example, is sometimes regarded as the pilot of life in the sense that it is the indispensable instrument for the attainment of practical ends, the means through which man gains mastery over the forces of material nature or discovers a common basis for coöperation with his fellow-men. From this point of view, ideas are valued in terms of their usefulness in practical application, and there naturally arises a certain impatience with regard to knowledge that is not directed toward some practical end. On the other hand, those who live the reflective life are apt to take up an equally one-sided position in defense of knowledge against the claims of practice. They are too often ready to maintain that ideas are debased and contaminated by being applied to practical affairs, and that knowledge is higher and purer when it remains isolated in the realm of the pure idea.

It is perhaps true that this is not an altogether just characterization of the position of those who are unwilling to subordinate knowledge to practice or to evaluate ideas in any offhand way in terms of their practical consequences. Yet I think the champions of knowledge for its own sake have not infrequently been led to define knowledge in a purely negative and abstract way as against practice, seeking to vindicate the claims of the intellectual life by separating it too sharply from the functions and offices through which it expresses itself. To separate knowledge from life, as something that might be contaminated by life's everyday demands and uses, is to take up an indefensible position. In so far as this attitude has existed, the prevailing demand that knowledge shall justify itself is a reasonable protest against an interpretation that not only robs knowledge of practical significance, but, in so doing, also renders it empty and impossible from an intellectual standpoint. For in the midst of our disputes about the relative importance of knowledge and action, it may at least be recognized that

either one, when taken in complete isolation from the other, becomes contradictory and self-destructive; the most unpractical of all men being he who is narrowly or exclusively practical, and the stupidest and most unenlightened man, he who deals only in abstract principles which have no relation to what is real and concrete.

In maintaining the value and dignity of knowledge, as is done by this society, there is involved no antagonism to what is practical; on the contrary, your motto emphasizes the essential and necessary relation between knowledge and life. What, however, is fundamentally antagonistic to the spirit and traditions of the Phi Beta Kappa society is that practical attitude which lays exclusive or primary emphasis upon external goods, which can have, at best, only a subordinate place as means or instruments in a rational life. We must distinguish sharply between what is truly practical for a man and what the word usually implies. It is, however, impossible to reconcile the conflicting positions by any mere definition of terms. There exists a genuine and radical antagonism between philosophy, as the love of wisdom, the pursuit of that which is in itself real, and the demand for practical efficiency, that which will yield some tangible cash value in a given situation.

It would be idle to conceal from ourselves that truth is about the last thing the average mind esteems or desires. The practical man is always impatient of the person who insists on facts or principles, despising these as not leading to immediate results. The spirit of the world, as Morley aptly satirizes it, is that "thoroughness is a mistake, and nailing your flag to the mast a bit of delusive heroics. Think wholly of to-day, and not at all of to-morrow. Beware of the high, and hold fast to the safe. Dismiss convictions and study the general consensus. No zeal, no faith, no intellectual trenchancy, but as much low-minded geniality and trivial complaisance as you please." Cynical as these counsels sound when thus baldly stated, they can scarcely be said to exaggerate the prevailing

worldly spirit of the man who prides himself on his practical good sense. It is not the mere absence of light that is depressing, but the open contempt for truth as something that is without significance in the affairs of life. It may appear to the young man going out into life that the practical forces are so strong and all-pervasive at the present time that the only prudent course is to capitulate and learn the rules of the game. But, after all, if his college life and the fellowship of societies like this have given him any glimpse of ideal values, his loss of courage can only be momentary. It is encouraging to remember that the history of the conflict between the ideal and the practical is the history of civilization, and that numbers have never been able to overwhelm the cause we represent. The history of success is the history of minorities.

The forces that war against light and knowledge in the name of practical expediency assume various forms, ~~and sometimes profess themselves champions of the highest spiritual interests~~. They may perhaps be classified under two heads: materialism, which demands that the fruits of knowledge be forthcoming in terms of external goods of some kind, and practical or sentimental idealism, which is likewise eager for quick return of profits, ~~and impatient with knowledge that does not contribute directly to the amelioration of the life of the individual or society~~. The influence of materialism is not due to the strength of its arguments; in fact, nothing is easier than to show theoretically that the evaluation of life in terms of material goods is thoroughly short-sighted and unpractical. But the appeal of materialism is rather to the desires than to the reason. It works through the longing that individuals feel for honor or wealth or personal enjoyment, or even presents itself in the name of the intellectual or æsthetic life, as a demand for the means of cultivation and self-realization. These influences are so subtle and insidious, as well as so constant and pervasive, that the individual is often led captive unawares, the good seed of idealism being gradually choked by the

cares of the world, and the effort required to maintain one's position as a man of affairs and to rank well with one's fellows. However, the practice of materialism soon leads to its expression in theory. When the indifference to ideas is boldly expressed in the form of a cynical theory, or, worse still if possible, in the Polonius-like advice to young men to throw aside ideas and aim at practical things, the paralysis of mind and soul have become complete, truth and the love of wisdom being expressly repudiated.

However seductive the rewards of material success, the futility of making these things the ends of life is, on reflection, clearly enough apparent. But the case is different when appeal is made to the desire to attain practical results of a higher order. The desire to serve society, to benefit one's fellow-men, is one of the noblest impulses of human nature, and appeals strongly to men of idealistic temperament. It is perhaps not too much to say that the increase of this spirit is one of the most hopeful manifestations of our own time, implying, as it does, a growing consciousness of the profound truth that we are all members one of another. Nevertheless, there is a real danger, I venture to think, in the philanthropic ideal when taken as an ultimate or exclusive end of life, and thus opposed to the pursuit of knowledge. The danger is that attention may become so exclusively fixed on practical results as to lead to impatience with the slow processes of thought, and thus to a contempt for truth as opposed to what seems for the time being to be the good of the individual or society. And it scarcely needs to be pointed out that, when this happens, the good will is itself perverted. There is a strange paradox in all spiritual life, yet a paradox that ceases to be perplexing when we remember that the mind is not a collection of separately acting faculties, but an organic whole. The paradox to which I refer is not merely that the corruption of the best is the worst, but that even the best thoughts and motives, when over-emphasized and taken apart from the other ele-

ments with which they are naturally and normally associated, prove contradictory, and are transformed into their opposites. Thus the desire to benefit society, when dissociated from the love for knowledge, soon degenerates into the extremest and emptiest form of egoism, into the desire for power or honor; or it leads straightway to the conviction that the practical end is so important that it must be realized at once and at all costs. It is never safe to love anything better than truth, no matter how high or holy it may appear to be. "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth," says Coleridge, "will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all." As John Morley puts it:

The law of things is that they who tamper with veracity, from whatever motive, are tampering with the vital force of human progress. Our comfort, and the delight of the religious imagination, are no better than forms of self-indulgence when they are secured at the cost of that love of truth on which, more than on anything else, the increase of light and happiness among men must depend. We have to fight and do a long battle against the forces of darkness, and anything that turns the edge of reason blunts the surest and most potent of our weapons.

I shall try, a little later, to show that the intellectual life, in its most complete exercise, includes within itself the highest practical activities. There can be no ultimate opposition between truth and goodness, between the ends of the intellectual and the moral life, when these are rightly understood. At present, however, I am rather concerned to point out how the prevailing emphasis on practice, although in its two forms seeming to appeal to quite a different order of motives, leads in both cases alike to an indifference to ideas that is destructive of the highest results.

I have put the matter in this way, dwelling on the antagonism between the ideals of your society and the prevailing tendencies, not for the purpose of bringing discouragement, but rather, so far as I may, to sound a trumpet and to summon you to arms. And, as is usually the case, the foes within are here more dangerous than

the foes without. The greatest danger is that the prevailing skepticism shall effect an entrance into our own minds and thus paralyze our efforts in behalf of learning. At the present time, it is essential, above everything else, that scholars, and the universities as the representatives of scholarship, should renew their faith in the sovereignty and efficacy of truth. May it not be, that the indifference to learning on the part of undergraduates of which we are hearing so much at the present time, is to some extent the outcome and reflection of our own skepticism and worldliness? Unless scholars can keep alive in their own hearts the love of truth, unless they are really absorbed in its pursuit, they cannot hope to inspire others with reverence for knowledge as for something high and noble. The fault must lie in ourselves and not in our stars. Even when circumstances seem most unpromising, the love of truth is a motive to which one may always confidently appeal. Next to distrusting his own reason, for the scholar the most fatal step is to assume that truth has no power to awaken a response in the minds of others. Indeed, these are both expressions of the same paralyzing skeptical attitude. To distrust human reason is to forget the fundamental fact that a knowledge of the genuine nature of reality is, as Plato says, the true nourishment of the soul, and that it languishes and dies when it turns away from truth and feeds upon opinion. Indifference to truth can never long maintain itself, in the face of light and conviction. It is vain, said Kant, to pretend to be indifferent regarding questions to which the human reason, from its very nature, can never be indifferent.

The first duty of the scholar, then, when he appears to be surrounded by hostile forces, is to keep his own light trimmed and burning:

To abate not one jot of heart or hope
But steer right onwards.

And he may derive encouragement by reminding himself that the cause of civilization is bound up with the

maintenance of ideas, with the perpetuation of the spirit of free inquiry. The cause in which he is enlisted is far-reaching, and of the highest importance. Without the work of the scholar who acknowledges as his master no other sovereign than truth, who restricts his inquiries by no practical or instrumental considerations, the spirit of freedom would perish from the earth. Not only would no real advances in the moral or intellectual life be possible, but with the free exercise of thought there would soon pass away the higher ideas and ideals that form the basis of our civilization. What the practical man holds in light esteem, the scholar's work of promoting and keeping alive the cultural ideas that form the basis of civilization, regarding it as effeminate or unfit for a man with red blood in his veins, is, on reflection, seen to be the most practical and important concern of humanity. And, similarly, the disinterested pursuit of ideas, that often appears to the man enthusiastic for practical reforms to be nothing more than a refined kind of selfishness, shows itself as the necessary basis and support for the moral life. "The love of knowledge for its own sake," says Locke, "is the principal part of human perfection, and the seed-plot of all the virtues."⁸ There is therefore no ground for discouragement at the present time; and above all no reason for the scholar to feel that his day is over, that his place is to be taken by the practical inventor or the politician or philanthropist who can show results that are valuable to society.

It may help to give force to these considerations, and to make them more concrete, if we consider their application more specifically to some of the problems of university life at the present time. As is well-known, very serious criticisms have been recently brought against the educational results that are being attained by the colleges and universities of the country, and various causes have been assigned as explanations of existing evils, and a variety of remedies proposed. Now, even if we agree among ourselves that these defects have been set forth in a some-

what sensational way, it is still impossible to deny that conditions are serious enough to call for our most earnest attention. It must be admitted, too, that the faculties and governing bodies of these institutions have to accept the primary responsibility for existing conditions, and that on them falls the duty of correcting abuses. I have no specific remedies to propose, but I feel sure that any program of reform must proceed from, and go along with, a renewal of faith in the value of ideas, and of courage in proclaiming them on the part of university teachers. It may be impossible to make headway directly against the spirit of the age, as it expresses itself outside the university; it may even be impossible to refuse admission to college to students whose aims and capacities render them to a great extent impervious to ideas; but it is incumbent on those of us who are teachers to hold up a different standard and to maintain an asylum where science and letters may be preserved and advanced, and from which they may go forth to the service of humanity. And I may add that the university has the right to expect the same spirit of devotion to truth from her loyal alumni. To be loyal to the university involves the duty of being loyal to the idea of a university, to its essential spirit and highest purpose. There is perhaps nothing so thoroughly discouraging to a university teacher, nothing so provocative of deep-seated pessimism, as the lack of sympathy often shown by alumni with the highest aims and interests of their alma mater. The noisy loyalty that discharges itself solely on the plane of sport is too often a hindrance, rather than an inspiration, to the work of the faculty. But, after all, the main responsibility for educational results must rest with the faculty; and the new spirit, if it is to come, must first find its expression through them. I have attempted to state some familiar truths regarding the essential nature of the scholar's vocation, and the grounds which he may find for encouragement, even when conditions appear most unfavorable to his efforts. But, looking at the matter from the ac-

tual position in which the individual teacher finds himself to-day, it may seem that these considerations are mere empty words, and that as things are they will remain. It is impossible, it may be urged, for either the teacher or the student to maintain standards essentially different from the society by which he is surrounded. And, moreover, even if we grant that the promotion of the intellectual life is the highest possible aim, when we take human nature and actual conditions as they are, have we any reasonable hope of success? Have not our demands been too high, the plan of education too far removed from the interests of our American youth, to call forth their activities? Let us come down from the heights, and, taking human nature as it is, aim at practical results, at giving our young men a training for life, at making them efficient leaders of business and qualifying them for holding political offices. They may happily in the process acquire some modicum of liberal culture and some respect for ideas. In spite of the element of truth that such statements contain, I cannot help feeling that they point entirely in the wrong direction. A university teacher is not the man to talk about taking human nature as it is, or of gratifying the actually existing interests of students. For his concern is with human nature as it ought to be, his function to awaken and call out interests that are yet only latent and which the student may not yet know that he possesses. It is a poor philosophy to take human nature as it is, and to fail to bear in mind that which it is capable of becoming. Moreover, if the university cannot maintain any higher ideals, or appeal to different interests, than those which are dominant in the outside world, what reason is there for its continuing to exist? The practical preparation for life may be better obtained in professional schools or in contact with the actual conditions of business life.

The question of the relation of the university teacher to practical life is most important, and one that demands serious consideration. It may be that here is one source

of his weakness. The older type of college professor was, as a rule, much less actively engaged in practical affairs than their successors are to-day. As a rule, too, the teachers in the great European universities occupy themselves much less with practical matters than we do. They accept scholarship and teaching as their high vocation, reckoning other things as for them of altogether secondary importance. But, among ourselves, the unpractical type of college professor, who lived in the world of ideas and was somewhat oblivious to mundane affairs, is rapidly vanishing. In the "Republic" Plato speaks of the necessity of compelling the philosophers to resign for a time the contemplation of the idea and to take part in the affairs of the state. At the present time, however, there seems to be no compulsion necessary in order to induce scholars to take up practical pursuits. It is so much easier to act than to think! We not only waste our strength on all kinds of practical questions regarding the organization and administration of the university, but we are also ready to lead reform movements in church and state, direct charities, organize conventions, or give advice on any practical subject whatsoever, under the pleasant conviction that we are rendering important public service, and also demonstrating that the college professor of to-day is a very wide-awake, practical person. Of course, all these activities may be good, but do they not tend to distract the mind of the scholar from his own proper business? The good may easily become the enemy of the best; and the best and highest for every man is his own station and its duties. Where the line is to be drawn in any case is a question for the individual. How far any college teacher may find it possible to engage in practical affairs will depend partly on his temperament, and partly on the degree of absorption that his own particular studies demand. But, if he finds that these things tend to distract his mind, and to dull the edge of his scholarly interest, let him not lay the flattering unction to his soul that he is doing something higher and more im-

portant. There can be no doubt that the highest efficiency for the scholar and teacher requires that he should sit apart from the practical world. He must, in a sense, renounce the world, and live in the inner realm of ideas, never allowing the things of sense and time to occupy the chief place in his heart. This does not imply that he is to be oblivious to what is taking place around him or indifferent to the interests of the society in which he lives. But he must realize that he can serve those interests best by devoting himself to his own proper work, by laboring to the utmost of his strength that the truth which it is his duty to teach be not error, that the light within his own soul be not darkness. He must be in the world but not of the world, having made the advancement and propagation of learning the great end and object of his existence. It is, of course, true that this breed of men has not entirely disappeared from the faculties of our colleges and universities. Otherwise, our condition would be hopeless indeed. But I think there are comparatively few teachers who will not admit that the pressure of outside distractions is seriously interfering with their devotion to scholarship and dulling their finer enthusiasm for truth. "The world is too much with us;" we are too anxious and troubled about many things, and tend to neglect the one thing needful. And truth is a jealous mistress, who will not grant favors to him who serves her with half a heart.

Moreover, there is no other motive than reverence for truth that will supply moral fiber strong enough to withstand the temptation, under which the teacher always labors, to obtain immediate results by pleasing his hearers, by giving them something that will appeal to their immediate interests and fancies, something that will produce an immediate effect. The desire to influence one's students in a practical way—even to make them better morally—is no proper substitute for the effort to lead them to think clearly and independently, and with a veneration for truth to follow the argument wherever it leads.

Without this element, instruction degenerates into a mere play of subjective opinions, and furnishes no true nourishment for the mind. "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed." When the guiding principle is lost, there is danger that the relations between teacher and student may tend toward the condition which Plato has described in the "Republic," as characteristic of the democratic state:

"The teacher, in these circumstances," he says, "fears and flatters his students, and the students despise their masters and tutors. And, speaking generally, the young copy their elders and enter the lists with them in speaking and acting; and the elders unbend so far as to abound in wit and pleasantry, in imitation of the young, in order, as they say, to avoid seeming morose or exacting."

It may perhaps be said, however, in defense of the practical teacher, that the main business of the universities is not to make scholars, but to train up men for the professions and for the service of the state. The most valuable and efficient teachers, therefore, will be men of the world who can give the student the outlook on life of the practical man and instruction in what will be of value to him when he leaves the university. There are two things that may be said in reply to this objection. In the first place, it would seem to have much more force when applied to the instruction demanded by professional schools and colleges than to the colleges of arts and sciences, of which I am now speaking. And, secondly, it cannot be granted that it is necessary to be engrossed in the affairs of the world in order to understand it. The spectator of time and existence, the man who would penetrate deeply into the meaning of things, must sit apart and observe and reflect. It is only thus that he can attain an objective point of view; his vision is obscured by too near a prospect or by being himself in the heat of the conflict. It is true, of course, that the majority of the students who attend the universities will not devote their lives to scholarship. Nevertheless, it is a mistake on the part of the university to adopt any other end than that

of producing scholars. The first function of the university is to see that the race of scholars shall never fail, to inspire and train men who shall perpetuate and advance the cause of learning. And it is of fundamental importance that this shall be done, and that a fair share, at least, of the very ablest and most capable men should be led to devote themselves to teaching and scholarship. Otherwise, if the noblest and best are drawn off into the practical professions, the cause of learning will be left to the spiritually lame and halt, the mediocre, cautious type of men who look forward merely to comfortable positions and Carnegie pensions. But after the demands of scholarship have been met, still the business in life of the majority of the students will be to apply ideas in various fields. This fact, however, is no argument for lowering the intellectual standards of the university in their case or for the assumption that knowledge and scholarship are for them of secondary importance. For the university becomes false to its essential function as soon as learning is subordinated to any other end. When a university becomes a social club, or depends for its support on the reputation of its athletic teams, it has ceased to be a university, and should surrender its charter as an institution of learning.

Moreover, it is of the utmost importance that the men who are to go out into the world to administer its practical affairs should be imbued with a loyalty to truth and a passion for light and clearness of ideas. If we would train men for the state, let us not forget that this is what the affairs of the state demand: the clear-headed courage that comes from loyalty to truth, the patience and resolution that proceed from a faith in principles, the fine sense of justice that can only be maintained by the man who has learned to rise above his own individual point of view and to understand the true objective relations of things. To develop character by implanting a reverence for truth, and a desire to serve under her banner, to awaken in their students a love of light and a passion for

clear and distinct ideas, this is the high duty of universities. If it is true that this aim has been somewhat obscured of late, if, growing skeptical of the value of ideas, we have put moral training and social experience and other false gods in the place of truth, then we must put away these idols from amongst us, and remember the high vocation unto which we are called. But is this practical, it may be asked? Must not the university conform to the conditions and needs of the country, and is not the demand of the country for practical, efficient men? Well, what is the test of efficiency? It is surely to be rated not primarily by the quantity or amount of the activity, but rather by the quality of the end achieved; not by the sensational character of the immediate results, but by the permanent value of that which has been realized. If, then, we insist that we must look to the end in defining efficiency, it is certainly true that to train and discipline the intellectual faculties, awaken the desire to see things clearly and to see them whole, is in the highest sense to promote efficiency. The university can have no higher or more practical function than to implant in its students the love of reality and truth, and the hatred of falsehood and shams.

The object of the Phi Beta Kappa society is the promotion of the spirit of liberal scholarship. More particularly, as I understand, it stands for literature in the broadest sense, for the humanistic studies that deal with the immaterial achievements of man's intellect. It is especially in these fields, however, that it is difficult to maintain an invigorating intellectual atmosphere at the present time. There seem to be wanting to the representatives of these branches of learning two sources of encouragement and stimulus that are enjoyed by the workers in the natural sciences. These are, first, the consciousness of the immediate applicability of their results to the practical interests of mankind; and, secondly, the courage and confidence that come from success in actually advancing the confines of knowledge and making absolutely new discoveries. The scientific worker has the

advantage over his colleague who is a humanist, also in the more general recognition of the importance of his results on the part of the public. Science may have its uses, and if it does not go too far afield it may be tolerated by the practical spirit; but letters and liberal culture the practical man regards as something weak and effeminate, something not worthy of the attention of serious, grown-up men. Even if it be desirable that students in the earlier years of their course should get a taste of language or literature or philosophy, it is felt by many that in their later years they should devote themselves to something more serious, if possible to studies bearing on some vocation. We find a striking picture of this attitude toward liberal study in the "Gorgias." Callicles, a Sophist of the worst type, remonstrates with Socrates on continuing to waste his time on a useless study like philosophy.

"Philosophy," he says, "as a part of education is an excellent thing; and there is no disgrace to a man while he is young in pursuing such a study; but when he is older the thing becomes ridiculous, and I feel toward philosophers as I do toward those that lisp and imitate children. . . . When I see a youth continuing the study in later life and not leaving off, I should like to beat him, Socrates; for, as I was saying, such a one, even if he have good parts, becomes effeminate. . . . What is the value of an art that converts a man of sense into a fool? Then take my advice, learn the philosophy of business, and leave to others these absurdities; for they will only bring you to poverty. Take for your model, not these word-splitters, but solid, respectable men of business who have shown their wisdom by becoming well to do."

The reproach that liberal culture is useless and effeminate, then, is not peculiar to our time, but represents the universal estimate of all those who apply a purely worldly standard of value. But there always has existed another standard of what is worth while in human life; and on the maintenance of that standard the cause of civilization rests. The teachers of the humanities at the present time have need of all their courage in order to stand firmly and aggressively against the Philistinism that nowadays vaunts itself in high places. They must refuse to compromise with the enemy, or to accept some inferior post in order to be kept alive, but continue to do

battle for the supremacy of man's spiritual ideals. And to carry on this work in the universities there is need of recruits, men of imagination and brains, "the fairest of our youth," as Plato says, "men sound in mind and wind, with a quick apprehension, a good memory, and a manly and lofty spirit." To such men the old call is still ringing out: Who will go up to the help of the Lord against the mighty? We cannot doubt that the universities will produce a breed of men to carry on this work. The fight is not over. It would be pessimistic to cry, "Zeus is now dethroned and Vortex reigns in his stead."

The representative of the humanities, therefore, who recognizes the full significance of his own work, has certainly not less real or solid grounds for enthusiasm than his colleague who occupies himself with science. For it is his mission to carry knowledge to its fullest and highest fruition, to interpret man to himself in the light of his past achievements and history. Knowledge is only real and genuine when it takes the form of self-knowledge. It is only then that it becomes human and liberating, that it is the truth that makes us free. And in order to know one's self as human, it is necessary to know humanity. "What should they know of England who only England know?" Kipling asks. Similarly, to know one's own mind, involves an understanding of what mind has achieved and become. In order to become rational and human, the individual must go beyond himself and enter into the heritage that belongs to him as a member of the family of rational beings. Culture is defined by Matthew Arnold as the effort to know the best that has been thought and said in the world. This, of course, implies more than a process of passive acquisition of foreign material. What we have inherited from the past we have to make our own, employing it as the means for the promotion of our total perfection, as Arnold tells us. The humanist accordingly has the duty of making the past live again, not of mechanically reproducing its accidental and temporal aspects, but of interpreting it in terms of its perma-

nent and eternal significance. And, as this work must be done by each age in the light of its own problems and conditions, it demands powers that are at once creative and critical. Indeed, all true criticism is at the same time creative. The genuine humanist, then, like the real scientist, is not deprived of the inspiration that comes from creative activity. He is called upon to advance knowledge, to contribute to the sum-total of ideas. The function which he is called upon to perform is to contribute to the solution of that most difficult and fundamental of human problems, the problem of self-knowledge. It is the most difficult, for it is the all-inclusive problem, being the interpretation of reason by reason. It is the most important, for only so far as the mind knows itself is it free. The history of the human race, as Hegel says, is the development of the consciousness of freedom. Or, in other words, it is the development of the consciousness of the true end and destiny of man that constitutes the real education of both the individual and the race.

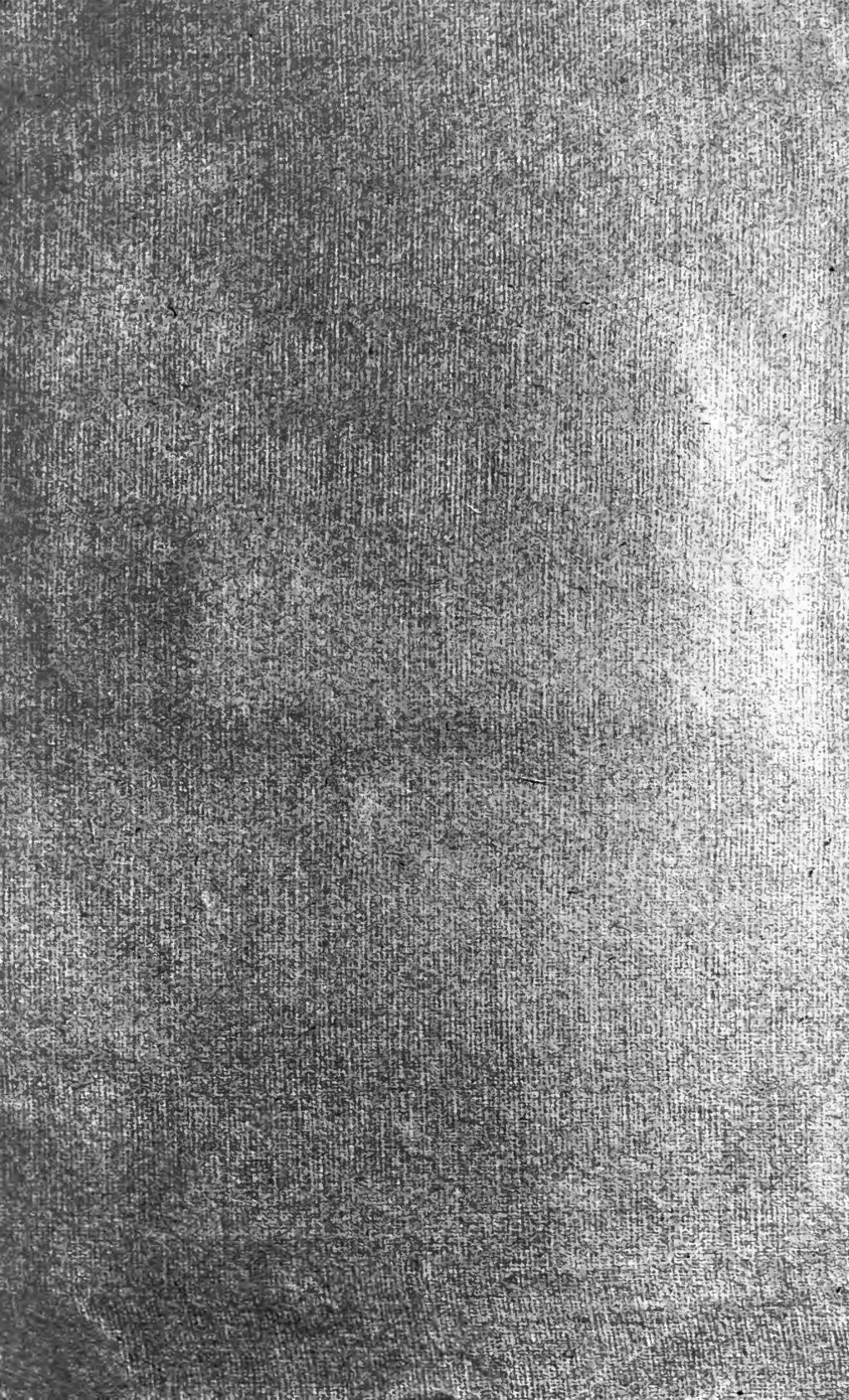
Philosophy thus becomes the pilot of life in the highest and most complete sense when the desire for wisdom and enlightenment enters into mind as its dominant and controlling purpose. This motive, at its highest and best, includes within itself the outer life of practice as its necessary means of realization and mode of expression. Truth can only be realized through contact with the objective world, and through sympathy and appreciation of the thoughts of our fellow-men. The intellectual life is not something isolated and abstract, something opposed or antagonistic to the virtues of practical life. The scholar cannot be essentially self-centered or selfish, or a man of cowardly spirit or low passions. In so far as these things enter into a man, they destroy his enthusiasm for truth and warp and pervert his ideas. On the other hand, when the desire for light and wisdom becomes the controlling principle of life, all the lower passions and desires are dried up at the roots. The practical life becomes the means and instrument of reason, its impulses

and activities being tested and evaluated in the light of the most complete knowledge that is attainable. And, finally, the more we reflect, the more firmly will we be convinced that devotion to truth, "loyalty to loyalty," in Professor Royce's fine phrase, is the only soil from which the other virtues can spring. For if this be lacking, if a man be indifferent to truth, regarding it as a thing of no practical importance, there is remaining no longer any center or core of personality, to which a consistent or a coherent character might attach. To be disloyal to our own best convictions, then, is the only skepticism that we need to dread. For this is to obscure the very fountain-light of our being, to cherish "the lie in the soul," as Plato puts it, which destroys and corrupts the entire character.

J. E. CREIGHTON.

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